

## Life Jacket Options

Hunting safety only takes a little bit of planning and preparation. A waterfowl life jacket can go a long way toward bringing hunters home.

- Life jacket designs have come a long way over the years and now come in a wide variety of styles and colors, including inflatables.
- Foam-filled life jackets keep you afloat and add extra insulation.



For full details on life jacket types and requirements, visit [mndnr.gov/boatingsafety](http://mndnr.gov/boatingsafety) or see the Minnesota Boating Guide.

## You Must Fight to Survive in Cold Water

Cold water immersion can kill in several ways, and most victims die before they become hypothermic. If you are wearing a life jacket, the **1-10-1 principle** may save your life.



### 1 Minute

- Remain Calm. Get breathing under control.



### 10 Minutes of meaningful movement

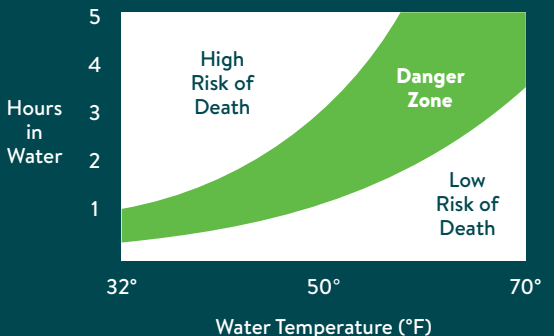
- Assess the situation and make a plan.
- Perform most important functions first.
- Self-rescue if possible.
- Deploy emergency communications and signaling.



### 1 Hour (or more) of useful consciousness

- Focus on slowing heat loss.

**Hypothermia Chart:** The **Danger Zone** indicates where safety precautions and appropriate behavior (adapting H.E.L.P.) can increase your chances of survival when immersed in cold water.



## Stop the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species

Protect waterfowl and habitat by helping stop the spread of zebra mussels, faucet snails, Eurasian watermilfoil and other aquatic invasive species (AIS).

Waterfowl hunter specific information with a video and tips for waterfowl hunters can be found at: [mndnr.gov/invasives/preventspread\\_watercraft.html](http://mndnr.gov/invasives/preventspread_watercraft.html)

For information about AIS and Minnesota law, visit [mndnr.gov/ais](http://mndnr.gov/ais).



### GENERAL INFORMATION

888-MINNDNR (888-646-6367)  
Mon – Fri: 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. / Sat: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
Live translation available  
[info.dnr@state.mn.gov](mailto:info.dnr@state.mn.gov)

### TURN IN POACHERS (TIP)

800-652-9093 (24 hours)

### BOATING INFORMATION

651-259-5400  
[boatandwater.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:boatandwater.dnr@state.mn.us)  
[mndnr.gov/boatingsafety](http://mndnr.gov/boatingsafety)

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# Water Safety for Duck Hunters



[mndnr.gov/boatingsafety](http://mndnr.gov/boatingsafety)



Waterfowl hunters seldom think of themselves as boaters, but in fact they are and need to follow the same safety precautions and laws as boaters every time they head out on the water.



## Safety on the Water

- State law requires a U.S. Coast Guard-approved wearable life jacket for each person on board all watercraft. Wearing a life jacket is the single best way to avoid a drowning incident while on the water.
- All children under 10 years old are required to wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket while on a boat.
- Don’t overload your boat.
- Avoid alcohol. Booze and boating don’t mix.
- Dress for the water temperature not the air temperature.
- Weather can change at any moment. Some of the worst storms strike when least expected. Strong winds and waves could capsize a craft or send a boater overboard. Bad weather in Minnesota usually comes from a westerly direction.
- Make sure the boat has enough fuel. No boater wants to be stranded on the water.
- Carry a cell phone, VHF radio or personal locator beacon for emergency communication. Keep in mind you may not have cellular service in remote areas.
- A whistle can also be used for emergency signaling.
- Take a boater safety course and receive a boater education certificate.

A safe hunt is a successful hunt.

## Prepare Before Heading Out

- Be prepared by acquainting yourself with the area.
- File a float plan – tell someone where you are hunting and when you will be back.
- Hunt with a companion or group, staying within visual or voice contact. Boating safety increases with numbers.
- Keep an eye on the sky. No boater should ever start out in a storm. Check the forecast before heading out on the water.
- Get information about water levels from the DNR website or area DNR office.

## Stay with the Boat

If you do fall out or capsize, stay with your boat and try to reboard.

- Most capsized watercraft can still float.
- A boat in the water is much easier for rescuers to find.
- If you have to remain in the water, do not attempt to swim unless you are wearing a life jacket.
- Keep boots and clothes on. Almost all clothing, even hip boots and waders, will float for an extended period of time. Practice trapping air in waders with a buddy while in shallow water.

## Avoid Common Mistakes

- Lack of life jacket use. Between 2012 and 2016, boating accidents killed 76 people in Minnesota. 79 percent of those who died were not wearing a life jacket. Wear it – don’t just bring it.
- Overloading a boat. Too much gear could cause a boat to capsize or swamp. Comply with capacity plate.
- Sudden shift in weight. Standing up or quick movement can cause a boater to fall overboard or a boat to capsize.
- Hunting during rough water or stormy conditions.
- Cold water immersion. Prepare for the unexpected. Even on sunny days, cold water can be deadly.
- Crossing large bodies of open water.



Preparation is the first step in planning a safe hunt.

## Use the H.E.L.P. Position

Reduce the effects of cold water immersion by assuming the Heat Escape Lessening Position (H.E.L.P.):

- Cross ankles.
- Cross arms over chest. Hands should be kept high on the shoulders or neck.
- Draw knees to chest.
- Lean back and try to relax.

*This maneuver should be tried in a pool before depending on it in an emergency.*

## Huddle Up for Warmth

If more than one person is in the water and all are wearing life jackets, the “huddle” is recommended.

- This is where small groups of two to four “hug” with chests closely touching.
- Arms should be placed around the backs of the others and kept underwater, while smaller individuals or children can be placed in the middle of the huddle.
- The huddle helps to conserve body heat and it is easier for rescuers to locate than one lone victim. Also, the close proximity of victims can serve as a significant morale booster.